



An Analysis of Women's Rights Enshrined in the Gadaa System: The Case of Gujii Oromo, Southern Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

The various historians and scholars of the classical and contemporary cultures attest that the Oromo Gada system is one of the indigenous democratic governances. Thus, women's rights enshrined in the Gadaa System, the practice of women's rights in the Gadaa System, and the protection of women's rights in the Gadaa System are among the important aspects of the Oromo Gada System. However, this aspect of the Gujii Oromo Gada system has been overlooked and received less research attention. Therefore, this article, aims at analyzing the situation of women's rights enshrined in the indigenous Gada system of the Guji Oromo of Southern Ethiopia. To that end, I used a qualitative approach whereby interviews were conducted with key informants with community elders, Gada leaders, Gada counselors, well-experienced women, and government officials from the culture and tourism office in the area of this study. The primary data were supported by data from secondary sources and an intensive review of the literature. The informants witnessed that within the Guji Oromo Gada system lies "woliigala seera unwaa" which literally means "agreed upon the laws of the Gujii women and girls" intended for protecting the Gujii women and girls from any form of abuse and violence. These customary laws have been translated into practices and people abided by them in the daily course of life of the Gujii community. Contemporary activities and practitioners of women's rights enshrined and gender empowerment undermined to recognize such valuable traditional rights of Gujii Oromo women. The paper recommends that the women's right enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system is viable and needs to be recognized and encouraged. Therefore to concluded that, the modern efforts of promoting and protecting the women's rights enshrined are, should have reconsider to creating space for harmonizing useful indigenous women's rights enshrined in the Gada system of Guji Oromo, Southern Ethiopia.

Keywords: *Women's rights enshrined, Guji Oromo, Gada system.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indigenous women are often described as the custodians of tradition and culture in different countries of the world Abiyot and Darley (2018). The prime responsibility of ensuring the cultures and traditional aspects of their elder peoples is has passed to future generations since it was the most noticeable expressions of their People's distinct culture Talilee, (2018: 1-11).

The indigenous women of in any Society has the right to share their knowledge of Cultural rights as a burden of institutionalized in their Societies indigenous Culture and gender-based without of any marginalizing there rights enshrined in the Cultural institutions Jirata and Endalkashew (2018).

In contrast to that, Ayehu and Lenin (2018) stated that, the indigenous women are the most vulnerable of indigenous peoples that faces double discrimination on the basis of their Gender and in their ethnicity's culture of the Oromo Community in east Africa.

To that evidences of the above reason, many scholars of in many African countries mentioned that, as the women's problems are compounded and compared to other marginalized categories because of their political and economic position in their societies Culture. For instance, Obi (2005:2) noted that, as the women constitutes are called the most marginalized of the marginalized.

In addition to this, Hiwot (2012) argues that again, as the women's status in Ethiopia declines as one goes from north to south and this position fails to understand the considerable cultural aspects, linguistic aspects, and religious diversity in the south where the women's sentiments do not constitute a uniform category.

Furthermore, similar heterogeneity characterizes the north and this assertion is conjectural at best and ethnocentric at worst. Moreover, this nuanced ethnographic data are needed if establishing any

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particular patterns of cultural rights is deemed necessary. In similar way to that, Muluken (2021:6) argued that, the generalizations of apparent from pastoral studies are portray women as utterly powerless figures who live at the mercy of their husbands.

Currently, according to Jeo in 2021 and Gebeyehu (2022:4) noted that, there are many cultural discourses that are influenced the indigenous Oromo Women through the many factors such as: Globalization, Modern Policies of Developed Country's Governments, Modern Religions of the Western and Eastern Countries of the World, and the imperial Government's Policies of Ethiopian in a past centuries are highly influenced the cultures values of south Ethiopian population through pushing down their languages, their indigenous cultural practices, their indigenous religious activities that are practiced on their area through the women's right enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system.

As result of that, the political dominant region in a past, like north Ethiopia is get the chance to impacts (to influence) the indigenous Cultural values of the another's Ethiopian Citizen and push's them to Substitutes the northern Ethiopian Cultural aspects through pushing down the indigenous languages of another Ethiopian Parties, the indigenous Cultural values of the another parties of Ethiopia, and the indigenous religions of the another Ethiopian parties of that time through using their own partial activities of imperial policies of political system and administration of the Ethiopia in a past that Leded by the few elites of the Northern Ethiopian Part.

Therefore, these factors strike my mind to study how and why the current globalization thinking of worldviews such as: various ideologies of today's world, and post-modernization impacts the local indigenous knowledge of women's multiple rights in the Guji Oromo Gadaa system. Furthermore, Study this is more important to give the direction forward through this study of the regarding women's right enshrined in the Guji Oromo to bridge the indigenous knowledge of women's right in the Gadaa System from generation to generation without losing the long-practiced Gadaa values and institutions in the case of the Guji Oromo Gadaa system.

2. METHODOLOGY

Many scholars have made an incredible effort to reconstruct the women's rights enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gadaa System. In this study the researcher employed both the primary and secondary sources and different data gathering instruments. Secondary data sources were collected by brief review of related literatures by assessing published and unpublished materials. To that end, the primary data

were collected through observation, Focus group discussion and interviews; were conducted with key informants like: Community elders, Gadaa leaders, Gadaa counselors, well-experienced women and Government Officials from the Culture and tourism Office in the Study Area of this Study.

Moreover, these data were described, expressed and articulated qualitatively Because the qualitative methodology typically involves the collection of data via interviews, focus group discussion, observation, oral history, key informants, and so on Dejene (2017:.490).

Thus, a qualitative approach was believable to dugout the fact that was the most important for exploring the ideas, events, responses, beliefs, changes, and continuity of the women's rights in the historical framework Vandelloo Joseph; (1991). A critical use of Oral traditions can helps the researcher to reconstruct women's right enshrined in the Gadaa system of Gujii society. This was followed by conducting field research among the Guji Oromo, which preserved Gadaa democracy for long period of time. This method provided me indispensable data to study Gadaa system. The data were gathered through interview and Focus group discussion with Haadha Bollaa, Elder Women and other elder women of from the grass root in Guji Oromo. Finally, all data were analyzed carefully in the standardized rules of the social science disciplines accordingly.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Era of Women's (Bara Akkoo)

According to Jemjem (2014:19) pointed out that the reason for the genesis of the Gujii Oromo Gadaa system emanated from the dictatorship regimes of these (Akkoo) women. The Guji mythology traces back to the administration system that follows the life of a human being as a social animal. The genesis of the Gadaa was first attempted during the era of women, which endured a harsh and women-biased tyranny of five consecutive Akko's namely, *Hoyyoyyoo Hoyoo*, *Hoyaa Garoo*, *Lalii lasoo*, *Qadbo Qasoo*, and *Akkoo Manoo*. Consequently, after these five leaders of the women, this duration was called the era of Queens due to their administration was full of tyranny. To that evidence, the tyranny of these women was perceived as extremely harsh punishments and their orders were humanly impractical and their demands were unaffordable. As a result, Jemjem & Dhadacha (2011) stated that the Guji people arranged ways and strategies to overthrow the women's era and return to men (*mootii*) and this situation

resulted in political power devolution that leads to the emergence of the Oromo Gadaa democratic system.

3.2. The Gadaa System and the Gujii Oromo Women

The Women and Gadaa system are inseparable in Gujii Oromo area. For instance, any ceremony practice (*jila*) in the Gadaa system that excludes women is not considered the full Gada ceremony because women are the pillars of the system since they have an indispensable role in the Gadaa system. Thus, in the Guji Oromo Gada system, a man who will be the incoming Abbaa Gadaa leader of the Gada party must get married when he became the *Raabaa (Luba)* stage. Hence, the wife of Abbaa Gadaa is called *haadha bollaa*. She has equal power with her husband regarding the power endowed in the Gadaa system. She is represented as the woman all women of the Guji Oromo in the Gada generation of that Luba Gada and works with the Abba Gada as the women representative in Gada power. Finally, she served as the head of the women of all Guji Oromo Community in Gada power.

3.3. Interconnectedness Functions of the Gujii Oromo Gada System and the Women

The interconnected functions of the Guji Oromo Gada system and women should have been respected. Because the Guji Oromo women played a great role in their indigenous Gada system for its continuity of today and to have its democratic features in past and still as an experienced learned from in ancient time queen and kings of early since the Gada system has been started.

Congruently, the Guji Oromo women served their indigenous democratic Gada system by producing cultural foods, and materials, practicing their indigenous culture, singing songs, encouraging their husbands or Abba Gada on their cultural works by advice, practicing their indigenous religion, showing their culture, customs, and norms to other societies of their neighbors, shaping their children life based on their culture, sharing their cultural experiences for the young generations how to produce and how practiced in their life of day-today-life.

In return, the Guji Oromo Gada system shapes the lives of women by teaching the women's how to couch their families, how to manage their house, how to help their husbands, how to control their family economy, and how to lead their life with their husbands and her husband family, how to carry out her responsibility based on the customary law of Gada system and protected her rights and the Gada system helps the women's to have their indigenous identities and continued it by respecting the

women's rights enshrined in the Guji Gada system. Therefore, the Guji Oromo Gada system and their women functioned with each other in a win-win form positive relationship that both of them benefited equally from each other.

3.4. The traditional Relations of Women and Husbands in Guji Oromo

In the administration of the family, the husband is the head of the family and has the sole power of choosing and establishing conjugal residence. In family management, the husband is with the consultation of his wife responsible to ensure the interest of the material and moral directions of the family, bringing up the children, and preparing for their establishment Zelalem (2019). The husband watches over the relations of his wife to guide her conduct as she owes him obedience in the interest of the household in all lawful things which he orders Gololcha (2006). Accordingly, when a wife or a minor child incurs liability to others the paterfamilias would be answerable-a woman or a child shall not be senior should they be sued.

Therefore, he exercises sole authority over her relations and over the members of the household in different matters. The wife is responsible for the internal affairs of the household xepho (2016:68). She takes care of the house, and children and is entitled to manage household economies. And also, they may demand all in the house, the husband has no right to touch *miinjaloo*-a place where goods are kept by the wife Jemjem & Dhadacha (2011). In case, if he proved of trying to control such items he is categorized as *qorqoraa*, it amounts to the divulgence of her privacy that is legally consequential. As Jemjem (2014) states that, to avoid such a consequence, a husband is always cautious when taking prepared food in her absence she had left it at the *miinjaloo*. For this purpose a house is taken to be the wife's entitlement as internal affairs of the family whereas the family as a whole is that of the husband's paterfamilias, beginning from marriage; he is titled as *Abbaa-worraa* and she is *Haadha-worraa* (family head and house manager) just from the time of legitimizing their marriage.

3.5. Cultural Diplomacy of Guji Oromo Women within Internal and External Societies

The Guji Oromo women play a great role in creating a strong relationship between the internal and external societies. First, they create internal relations between the two different families and two different Guji Oromo Gosa (*fira*) clans by concluding marriages with their men. As a result, in the Guji

Oromo Gada system, the son-in-law takes as a member of the family (*Soddaan worraa*). The sons-in-law do not fight with each other and even if they fought with other their cases (Problems) were not discussed by another person as another's rather they solved by themselves by communicating with each other or giving the gift of *godhaa* to each other. This was because they took one family and the sons-in-law were highly honored (*Soddaan woyyuu*). Similarly, the mother-in-law does not call her girl daughter's husband's name, if he is named Luba level, and her girl daughter's husband also not called his wife's mother's name. In addition, they do not look to each other, because they honored and respect each other as (*woyyuu*) in the internal relation of Guji Oromo based on the Gada system.

Second, the Guji Oromo women could have external relations with the societies of the Guji Oromo community and may include the out-of-Oromo nations by concluding marriages with their young men. The Guji Oromo community respects their sons-in-law based on their own Gada culture without creating any differences, even their girl daughter married from any nations and nationalities elsewhere in the world. As a result, their sons-in-law from other nations and nationalities may learn their Gada culture, language, customs, and their cultural norms including the customary laws of the Guji Oromo community, from the girl concluding the marriages with him from the Guji Oromo community.

Third, the Guji Oromo women also have a strong relationship with their environments and nature. They have strong relations with the trees to use for different purposes such as; wood, to making tools for milk, using cultural medicine, using for food purposes, and the shadow of the trees by sitting under the tree when there is when they perform cultural ceremonies, etc.

3.6. The Women's Rights enshrined in the Gada System

Many times, it has been observed and witnessed when some peoples talk as women do not have power in the Gada system. However, the main point here, that everybody elsewhere in the world should have known is, before the world not started their now day's democracy, that today they used as their first choice in their political administration system, the Oromo traditional Gada system of democracy administration started and ruled the Oromo societies by sharing the Gada powers from child age societies up to their old age societies as the power shared fairly to all societies and administrated them democratically.

Likewise, in the Guji Oromo, the Gada system cannot be practiced without women's participation. Even if it was celebrated it was not taken as a full ceremony. As the respondents from elders, in Guji

Oromo Abba Gada should have a wife to become the Gada leader. Thus, in the Guji community, the person who does not have a wife is known as *konfoleessaa*. The *konfoleessaa* is not taken as a full person for the jila Gada ceremony. Therefore, the Guji Oromo Gada systems enshrined enumerators' rights for the Guji Oromo women's equal with their men.

3.6.1. Women's Human Rights in the Gada System

The Guji Oromo Gada system of governance fairly respected the human rights of women with balancing the human rights of men equally. In natural Guji, there are no harmful traditional practices on women and girls rather respecting and protecting their human rights. These Because Guji Gada systems do not allow the violation of the human rights of women. For instance, the Guji Customary laws of the Gada system do not allow marriage by abduction because of respect for the human rights of the Guji Oromo women Jemjem (2014). Therefore, their human rights should have been respected equally.

3.6.2. The Political Right of Women

According to Jemjem (2014), in the Guji society women have the full right to have their position. For instance, when the level of *dabbalee* both of them called the mother of *mat-gudesa dabbalee* and father of *dabbalee mat-gudesa* when the level of *kare (Qarree)* both called the father of *qarre mat-gudesa* and mother of *qarre mat-gudesa* and when the kusa level he called the father of *kuusaa* and also, she called the mother of *kuusaa*. Therefore the Guji women at the stage of *raabaa* have the political power called *Midhoo* and are known as *Haadba murti raabaa* (mother of Raba) and she also has the political power called *Haadba ambaa* when she is the *Doorii* stage (mother of Doorii) during the *Doorii* stage.

The jila ceremony of the Guji Oromo Gada system that women or *haadba bollaa* came to the traditional political power is called *Jila Guutimala*. *Guutimalaa* is a sign of the traditional power of women that is put on women's heads and used to be equivalent to the *kallachaa* of Abba Gada Jemjem & Dhadacha (2011). When the *Guutimalaa* is put on the women's heads, it put the firstly for the wife of the faga or Abba Gada's advisor and the wife of *Abba Gada* or *Haadba Bollaa*, and the left three women selected as the members of five traditional Gadaa's cabinet (five leaders of women) of women's were continues based on their cultural order. On this day jila ceremony, the old female cow should have been

slaughtered to show this Gadaa's years became Good years for their community. At this jila Ceremony, the sign of their *Dooromaa* is put on women's heads like *wodaroo qaqaldhoo* taken from their heads. *Wodaroo qaqolloo* takes from her head by her brother.

When he take this *wodaroo* she asked him "by what you take it from my head?" she said, he said I give you a cow. This cow called *Raada Guuto*. They blessed by saying "*Guuto siihortu*". And finally, she has the power called *Haadha Bollaa* during the Gada stage at the *Ardaa jilaa* of *daraartu* around the *Adoola*. In the Guji Oromo, the women got political power before the men. On this *Ardaa jilaa*, the large ceremony was the ceremony of the *guutimala* of women. The *guutimala* was made from ribuu (the meat of the back of the cow) taken from the back of the slaughtered cow *Guutimalaa* has four lines of copper metal arranged and put on their head. When this *guutimalaa* was put on their head, the women that *guutimalaa* put on their head were said, *Gada, Gada, Gada*, and *Gada*, to show their traditional power level of Gada. When the women's said this, the attendees of this *jila guutimalaa* ceremony said, *guutuu biyyaa ta'i* (be a tip or top leader of the society); *kolbaabaadhu* (be the mother of the society); *Gadaa baadhu* (be the mother of Gadaa) "said and be lease her to recognize her traditional rights in political power in the Guji Oromo Gada system". After this *jila guutimala* ceremony, she has all the traditional power that the Abba Gada have equal to him and she could order the all positions that the Abba Gada order. She called *haadha bollaa*. She works by representing the all-women of the Guji community and no one can make the *jila Gada* ceremony by reducing the women.

For instance, the wife of Guji Abba Gadaa is called *Haadha-bollaa*, bearing the title and responsibilities equivalent to first ladies in modern politics. According to Jemjem (2015) stated that, she is the head of women in the respective administration system of her husband. *Haadha-bollaa* literally means mother of the throne or mother of Gada; which is the official name and responsible of the wife of Abba Gada. As the respondents told the researcher, the Guji Oromo Gada system shares the traditional power of the Gada system; equality for all humans without identifying them by their sex. Similarly, when Guji Abba Gada came to the Gada power, the women also, came to the Gada power equally.

At the *Baatu* level when he becomes *Baatu*, she is called the mother of *Baatu*. When he became *Yuuba*, she called him the mother of *yuuba* and when he became *Jaarsa Ginya* (Sign elder), she called him the mother of *Gign*. In other words, the *jila Gada* ceremony is not full without the women's participation in the Guji Oromo Gada system.

In Guji, the house wife is known as the house manager. She is control the all activities of in her house and she plays the role to build the indigenous knowledge of her girl daughters as she has grow up with good experiences of how to do cultural materials, and how to do works in her house in the future. She is also teaches her girl daughter how to respect her husband, her children, how to couch house and families, based on her cultural norms and respect full of other neighbors to live together peace full as the starting point of the cultural politics stage in a community.

In the time of war, she gives the motivations for males. She prepared the logistics support like food and water that were used by war attendees up to they came back to their families. She prays to God to attendees of the war as God help them to come back safely from the area of the war. She gives her *Imu (callee)* for the man who killed the enemy by putting it on his neck and she gives the better for a person again by putting the better on his head and also he gives her the cows which he takes from the war area. This cow given to her is known as *Agaaguu*.

3.6.3. Economical Right of Women in the Gujii Oromo Gadaa system

The Guji Oromo women have the following traditional economic rights: She started to own the economical wealth individual from her father and mother before she concluded her marriage with her husband. She may have *handburaa*, the cattle that was given by her father when she was born and her mother washed the water after three or four days of her birth. This is taking the Initial point of their children's Guji Oromo Community. After she aged above ten years old, she has her individual bedroom in her mother's house.

She puts her individual materials and the individual wealth that she owned at this level from her family before her marriage like *Buqqii ibsaa*, her wearing clothes, *Ciicoo Mijuu*, *Siiqqoo*, *Quttoo*, *Kadboo*, and the material culture that she used to produce cultural material to learn this indigenous knowledge from her mother before her marriage is put in her individual bedroom. She may have the *Ameessaa* the cattle that she may milk to get the better that she used for her as additional to her *handburaa* from her family before she concludes the marriage with her husband. These cattle were given to her in the form of *Geegoo* when she concludes the marriage with her husband from her family to her. She also has the *Ijibbaataa* from her family when her father was died that given by her elder brother as gaining her share's from her father wealth's owned.

After she concludes the marriage with her husband, although, she gains the following economic: she has not allowed interring the get her hand family's house unless the husband's father gives her the cattle. As a result of this reason, she takes the cattle from her husband's father. After she inter their house she is not allowed to give her *siqqoo* and *quttoo* to her husband's family unless her husband's family gives her the two cattle as a result of her *quttoo* and *siqqoo* for her. After they give these two cattle to her she gives her *Siqqoo* and *quttoo* for them. She although, not allowed to eat and drink the food like better unless her husband's mother gives the cattle to her.

Again, she takes the cattle as a result of this her husband's mother. Not only these, the *handburaa* that was given to her husband by his father before she married him is although became shares own *ameessaa*, and the all house material and wealth like cows, goats, sheep, Comal's, caves of the bee and agricultural that they used for the food crop production that her husband owned before he married her become as her owned economic that she has equal right to use with her husband. That means, according to the Guji community married women have an equal right to own their husband's wealth. For instance, the cows of her husband before she marries become her *Ameessaa* after she married him and the other sources of the economy became their usage of their life together. And serve their families as the economic. He cannot use that loneliness without of he is discusses with her. Therefore, the Guji women and their husbands lead the economy of their families together by discussing each other.

Finally, She and her husband may have the support of both of (*birbaa fi dabaree*), which means his or her family may support her by cows for an unknown time. while *birbaa* means the gift given by his or her family, *worraa*, *fira*, and *gosa* give the gift like cows, goats, sheep, etc. given to them by the form of *birbaa* if they are economical very poor. And although, she may call her husband by her family like; her father or her husband's father, her brothers or her husband's brothers, and the like and gives them support like buying clothes, and giving different gifts like wealth to help their poor economy.

3.6.4. Cultural Rights of Women

The traditional (cultural) rights of women enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system must be respected. The Guji national (cultural) of the Gada system was highly respected by the women's rights enshrined by their indigenous culture of the Gada system. This indigenous culture of the Gada system gives the first place to their women by giving the first women their women. For instance, in the Guji Gada system, women were highly respected and honored. The Guji Oromo women's respect started

from her family when she aged above ten, for example, she was not touched by a man's hands including her brothers, her father honored her and he does not fight with her because she has controlled by her mother only. Her mother gives the advice for her about bad behaviors and tells her as she has controlled her selves from unnecessary behaviors. And although, have control of her salve from an unnecessary friend or the friend who does not have good behavior.

She has her own individual bedroom in her mother's house that she used for her sleep time. She has the right not insulted rather and someone who is angry with her may tell her mother and father. She did not go to a place not unknown to her family. When she married her family told to her husband give their daughter all full physical health and should have not reduced her full physical health like; have not brock her bone, her teeth, her eye, her hands, and legs must have equal they said. She has the right to control her husband's economy and she has the area only controlled by her traditional in her house which is called *miinjaloo*. This area is the area that the economy of the family put in the house. Her husband does not have the right to touch on this area cultural. If he touches this miinjaloo area he can punish by the clan (*fira or gosa*). The woman who has the husband was very honored and respected not insulted, not touched by the hand, even fighting with the person does she not bite rather than told for her husband.

When her husband fought with his wife, she has it right not to bite above the gulanta area, because, if they fought at this *gulantaa* area, God may can angry with them. They did everything by discussing with each other. If her husband tries to do without discus he may have been punished by his *fira*. For instance, the Abba Gada does not cross the riverside before the woman or his wife, not any man eats the food before the woman or his wife, in the *buna qalee* ceremony, not any person eats the food before the woman, not *jila Gada* is full ceremony without women's participation and not Abba Gada was elected if he did not marry another word her word, the Guji Oromo women's have the rights to participate to the parallel of men in the Gada system. For instance, when *doorii* men cut the *Bokku woddeesaa* tree; the *doorii* woman cut the *siiqqoo* from the *Qajimaa* tree. Men have the Horooro afata ceremony; women have the uddoo afata ceremony. When the Abba Gada makes the *maqibaasaa* ceremony for males; the *baadha bolla* makes the *maqibaasaa* ceremony for the females. When the men become the Abba Gada; the women's become the *baadha bolla*. Therefore, the Guji Oromo Gada system highly respected the women's rights enshrined in Guji Gada system.

3.6.5. Religious Right of Women

The Guji Oromo women's religious rights should have been respected. According to the Guji Oromo community, the *qaalluu* of the Guji Oromo have married the wives of members of *qaalluu* clans like *Galalcha*, *Obbituu*, *Haloo*, and *Heeraa* because of the *qaalluu* and *qaallittii* should lead the traditional religion and their indigenous Gada system together each other. The *qaalluu* married from the *qaalluu* clans to keep their spiritual continuity. If he married from outside *qaalluu* clans he may lose the spiritual forces that were given to him from supper natural forces. If he married from outside of the members of *qaalluu* clans he may become *faansboo* (the person who does not have the power of natural *qaalluu*). Therefore, he should continue the *qaalummaa* by marrying the girls of the clans of natural *qaalluu*. The *qaallichaa* and *qaallittii* are the persons who serve as an intermediary between humans and the supernatural (God). It was traditionally believed that they could hear the sound of the supernatural (God) and supernatural communicated with them.

3.7. The Customary Law Dealing with Women

3.7.1. The Customary Laws Dealing with Mother (Seera Haadhaa)

The customary laws concerned the mother mentioned the following: The mother whose birth a person is sacred, which is *gooroo*. The mother should be honored, this is the law. She should not be insulted, which is the law. The mother must be honored because she gives birth which is *gooroo*. A person who misbehaved (misbehaved) with his mother must be punished according to the law. The person who shows misbehavior with his mother would be punished by his clan (*fira* or *gosa*), which is the law. The clan (*fira* or *gosa*) should punish the person who shows misbehavior with his mother by biting him by *kutaa fira*, which is the law. After biting him by *kutaa fira* they slaughtered his cattle, which is the law. The person who was punished by the clan (*fira* or *gosa*) should give *godbaa* to his mother, which is the law. He must give clothes and *raadaa* to his mother, which is the law.

3.7.2. The Customary Laws Dealing with Unmarried Girls (Seera Intala Bantii)

The unmarried girls should be honored, which is the law. A man cannot play with her by touching her physically, which is the law. She does not go to the place where her family does not know, which is the law. She has to move with her family members, which is the law. The unmarried girl should not sleep with any man, which is the law. She does not do this because her customary law Gada system

may violate, which is culture. The girl who is a virgin should be honored, which is culture. She should not use traditional perfume, which is culture. And the unmarried girl is distinguished from others by her *quttoo*, this is the law.

3.7.3. The Customary Laws Dealing with Marriage (Seera Fuudhaa Heerumaa)

A girl has to be married, which is culture. The marriage should be in line with the culture and the person who marries the girl should ask her *worraa*, *fira*, *Luba*, *baallii*, *balbalaa*, and *manaa* to marry her, which is culture. The girl and man in the same *fira* should not get married to each other, which is the law. This is considered as an incestuous act (*kobaa*) if she is married to her *fira*. Because of this reason, the girl should not get married to her *fira*, which is culture. The girl married at disposal of the family (*Kadbaa*), which is culture. The girl married by mutual consent (*Hawadii*), which is culture.

The girl married by the official preference of her own choice (*Addibaana*), which is culture. Abduction is illegal, which is the law. Levirate marriage shall be based on the free and full consent of the widow, which is the law. Guji could marry another *fira* if they are members of the same level as each other, which is the law. All incestuous acts can be purified, except in aunt and grandmother relations, which is the law.

Upon request of family incestuous marriage shall be void and purified, which is the law. The marrying girl shall have "*Mijuu*", which is the law. The marrying girl shall have "*Quttoo*", which is the law. The marrying girl shall have "*Siiqqoo*", which is the law. The marrying girl shall have "*Kadboo*", which is the law. Failing to fulfill one of the preceding for amounts to abduction, this is the law. The father of the married girl is given one cattle, which is the law. Her brother takes two cattle when the married girl died, which is the law. This is done to show her honor and respect, which is the law.

3.8. The Protection of Women's Rights

The protection of women's rights enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system should have gained recognition and space. Based on their indigenous democracy system, the women's rights enshrined in the Guji Gada system have their own indigenous methods that are used to protect all men and women's rights in the indigenous Gada system of administration. In the Gada system, both men and women have a great role and responsibility to protect women's rights enshrined in the Gada system.

There are many methods that are used as methods of conflict resolution between the societies, clans, families, husband and wife, individuals, and also the problems between human and supernatural relations to solve and protect the customary rights of individuals in the indigenous Guji community and group rights. Both of them should carry out their traditional responsibilities to protect the right of one another. The methods of their indigenous democracy to solve problems were as the following:

3.8.1. Kinds of Punishments or Sanctions Practiced

There were also many types of punishments or sanctions that are practiced when the customary law of the Gada system was violated. There are punishments practiced on physical bodies, punishments practiced on ownership of properties, and moral punishments. These punishments are practiced at different levels of the community from low level up to high level (from one house family up to supernatural) it is practiced step by step as the following:

3.8.1.1. The families in One House (Maatii Mana Tokkoo)

The first level was the level of family living in one house. At this level, the punishment is based on the customary law of the Gada system that has been practiced at one household family. The members of the family in one household include the father (head of the family), the mother (house manager of the family), and their children. At this level, the husband and wife lead their family by discussing with each other. They advise their children. They give warning to those who show misbehavior and they may punish them by simple punishment like beating them with a very tin stick that does not harm them. They also teach their children about the culture of their society as they grow up. Children are also taught about their *baallii*, *Luba*, *fira (gosa)*, *mana*, and *balbalaa* to enable them to know their position of *miseensaa (Gandaa)* relationships.

According to Guji Oromo customary laws, a son who married his *miseensaa* girl takes her to his family house (his father and mother's house) before he touched her. This is because when he takes the girl to his family's house his father would ask her *worraa*, *baallii*, *Luba*, *mana*, and *balbalaa* to check whether he and she were free from incensing or *miseensaa (Gandaa)* to each other so that they can marry to each other. Otherwise, the father would not allow his son to touch her (he could not sleep with her). She sleeps at the back of his father and returned to her father's family at the price of cattle based on the Guji Oromo Customary law of the Gada system. The family can punish the man who

gets married to their girl daughter by abduction methods as this is illegal by the customary law of the Guji Gada system.

According to the Guji customary law, this man could be punished by paying fourteen Cattle, reduced from his own Cattle. This is done because it is assumed that he took the girl by using force without her interest to marry him and violated her customary right of the Guji Oromo Gada system. Therefore, her family takes on the man who married the girl by customary law to protect her rights enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system. From the fourteen cattle payment, seven are given to her family. The other seven cattle are returned back to his family. Not only this, he may be beaten by her brothers physically with sticks and he may even lose her as the punishment of the customary laws of the Gada system of Guji Oromo because he takes her by using force. Her family may give her to another man based on her interest and her love.

3.8.1.2. Collections of the families related up to the seven fathers within a clan (worraa)

The second level is the level of *worraa* stage (the collections of the families related up to the seven fathers within a clan). The *worraa* level includes the sons of the seven fathers within their clans (*gosa* or *fira*), the fathers of the sons of the seven fathers within their clans, the grandfathers of the sons of the seven fathers within their clans, the grandfathers of grandfathers of the sons of the seven fathers within their clans and it would continue up to seven fathers generation within clans .etc. The cases taken to this level are stronger than the cases at the family level and more difficult to be concluded at the level of the family of one household. Similarly, the punishments of the *worraa* Stages are stronger than that of the family in one house.

Punishments like the following were practiced under the *worraa* stage based on the Guji Oromo Gada system to protect the women's rights enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system. The punishments include the beating of the young son (unmarried young man) who does not obey the law of his mother and father. These may happen when his father and mother are too old and do not have any more children with them to control this young man. Therefore, they call the *worraa* assembly to beat him by *kutaa fira*. But, this could be concluded at the family level if his father is not too old and had many men children with him. This is because the elder brothers have the right to control the behavior of their younger brothers.

At the *worraa* level, they could also punish the married man who is not willing to help his wife and children by beating him as a form of *kutaa fîraa*. When the husband shows some kind of misbehaviors such as drinking too much alcohol, selling a property without the family plan and without his wife's consent; e.g. selling cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, camels, their agricultural land of crop production (farmland) and their house. The man who always fought with his wife without reasonable cases or show his brute force to her without any misbehavior of her and the man who may try to control a woman's space called *miinjalloo*, which is allowed to women only based on the customary law of Guji Oromo Gada system may be beaten by his *worraa* when his wife exposed the actions of her husband to the elder person of the *worraa* (her husband's father, her husband father's brother and her husband's elder brother) and the like to protect her rights enshrined in the customary laws of Guji Oromo Gada system. These men who violated the women's rights enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system would be punished by beating him with very tin stick physically. The *worraa* then slaughters the cattle of his own as additional punishment for his property. The women's rights enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system could be protected by this form of punishment at the *worraa* level. More difficult cases that could be passed to the next stage of the clan (*fira or gosa*) are discussed as follows.

3.8.1.3. The Gosa (Fira) Clan

This stage is the collection of all families of the *gosa (fira)* clan. This level was used as the top- power (top-position) or high-level power of the *gosa (fira)* clan and it is used as the middle-level court stage below the Gada assembly (*yaa'a Gada*) of Guji Oromo to protect the women's rights enshrined in the Gada system. All cases (problems) of the *gosa (fira)* clans are concluded here under the *gosa (fira)* clan level. The cases presented under this level are wider and more difficult than the cases presented at the *worraa* level and the punishments passed on the men who violated the women's right enshrined in the Gada system was more difficult than the punishments taken at the *worraa* level. According to the Guji Oromo community, this level has its own leader called the holder of the clan stick (*Abbaa Ulee gosa*). This man leads all cases of the *gosa (fira)* clans as a whole and all problems of that *gosa (fira)* clan are presented at this level were concluded under this stages led by *Abbaa Ulee Gosa* (the father of clan stick). The problems (the cases) presented at this stage may include: 1. The problems (cases) of sons that show misbehavior with their mothers and fathers. They may have committed crimes by insulting their mother. For such kinds of acts they could be punished by being beaten by their clan men with

very tin sticks physically, their cattle would be slaughtered and they are punished by giving gifts of cloth sins to their mothers.

2. The problems (cases) concerned wife and husband relations that their clan married from other clans by their clan's men and her customary right enshrined in the Guji Gada system violated by her husband. This man May makes the crime by stopping the help of his wife and children, and also, he may leave her with her father's family without enough reason and he could be punished as a result of his crime by his *gosa (fira)* clans because of he left her in the problems with his children. He can bite his clan his physical bodies and his owned cattle slaughtered from his properties.

3. The problems of their girl daughter that married another clan's man from their clan and her customary right enshrined in the Gada system were violated by her husband. The punishes her husband by taking their girl daughter that married another clansman that her right was violated by her husband by sending her brothers as they bring her to them and asked her husband to bring his father or their elders when he comes to her family and asked why they take her and asked the excuses to come back with his wife to his family. They called their clan elders to tell as they have to protect the right of their girl daughter and to advise their son who's married their girl daughter.

4. The agenda of their *gosa (fira)* clan is may concerned with their wife whose husband may die (*baadha-nyyeessaa*) and how she may have gained help from their clan. They may assign the person who's followed her nearly and reported the problem facing her and her children to the clan of her husband who died. 5. The agenda is may concerned with their unmarried girl daughters and young men who are not married. They may discuss how they have followed their young men and women have to know how they followed the order of their families (mother and father).

6. The agenda concerned with *dhaalaa (miiloo)* and their clan's person who was killed by another clan's person. They may punish the son who's not allowed to give his father material to the concerned bodies and the man who's not allowed to take his brother's material from his brother's son by biting the very tin stick (*kutaa fira*) because they violated the customary laws of Guji Oromo concerned with this *dhaalaa miiloo* culture of Gada system.

7. The agenda of *gosa (fira)* clans is to make help's poor's (*birbaa-dabaree*). They may collect the gift to the poor man by giving; cattle, goats, sheep, etc.

3.8.1.4. Gada Assembly (Yaa'a Gadaa)

At this stage, the collection of the all clans of the Guji Oromo community is level was taken as the leader of all Guji Oromo areas and the all Guji Oromo community. The level was headed by *Abbaa Gada and haadha bollaa* (the wife of the Abbaa Gada). This level represented the all Guji Oromo population to administrate by solving their problems (cases) peacefully. The Gada assembly (*yaa'a Gada*) the mandates of the power (position) controlled all activities in the Guji Oromo community because they were in the power of the Gada system for the next eight years.

At this level, they were done many works that concerned the traditional culture of the Gada system besides leading the Gada power. These works include leading the Gada power, teaching the Gada culture to young generations and neighbor peoples, controlling the Guji Oromo areas that they have translated to their young generations, and solving the problems between the community and their neighbors to make them as they live together with each other. There were not many cases presented at this level because the many problems may be solved at the *gosa (fira)* clan level and only the rare problems (cases) may be presented here at the Gada assembly. Not only this, the *gosa (fira)* clans of their problems (cases) presented at the Gada assembly fills the shame (taken as the clans who cannot solve their own problem). As a result, all Guji Oromo clans tried to solve their clan problems before they presented at the level of the Gadaa assembly rather the problems (cases) were very difficult cases than the clans and their solution was needed only from the Gada assembly. Because there was a saying concerned the *gosa (fira)* clans that cannot solve their problems following:

“Maatii Gonmaa, dubbiin worraa dhaqxi. Worraa Gonmaa, dubbiin gosaa dhaqxi. Gosaa Gonmaa, dubbiin yaa'a dhaqxi. Yaa'a Gonmaa, dubbiin qaalluu dhaqxi.” said, proverbs. The problems of like; the husband whose wife fought with him and wants her father's family and stay there for a long time before he created a peaceful relationship with her is just announced on the Gada assembly by her husband before the power (*baallii*) transition to another Gadaa. Rather (if he does not tell on the Gadaa assembly before the power or *baallii* transition) he may lose his wife as his punishment (sanction) because he does not tell on the Gadaa assembly. These problems (cases) may gain solutions by this method only because

it needs the solutions from the Gadaa assembly directly and it cannot be solved at the *gosa (fira)* clan levels.

3.8.1.5. Qaalluu Institutions

The Guji Oromo community believed that the Qaalluu was the intermediary between their community and their supernatural. They again believed that the supernatural gives power to the qaalluu institutions. The Qaalluu was the representative of the God on earth and he may communicate with his supernatural to tell the problems of the Guji community the supernatural have solved to his Guji community and to make excuses for their seniors, to minimize the bad chances that they may join their future life of in their day-to-day life.

The problems (cases) presented at this level were very rare when compared with the different levels of the Guji community that they used to solve their different deputies between the Guji community. This was because; of Guji community strongly believed in and honored their *Abba Gadaa*, as he works always the truth. The level of qaalluu was taken from the comments and fed backs that the Guji community gives on their Gadaa assembly (*Yaa'a Gada*) if they have the communities on their discussions (*punishments*) or sanctions given by Gada assembly (*Yaa'a Gada*). As a result of this many numbers of their societies do not have comments on Abba Gadaa's sanctions (punishments), the cases presented here were so, pure in number. But, if it may they could give the comments at the qaalluu institutions level that concerned their Abba Gadaa or Gadaa assembly. The qaalluu could follow the cases of all Guji communities and women's rights enshrined in the Guji Oromo Gada system as the traditional religious leader and the head of Guji Oromo Cultural laws, without creating punishments (sanctions) for differences between the sexes (women and men). This means he served both sex equally.

3.8.1.6. Super Natural or Sky God (Waaqa Uumaa)

The Guji Oromo community believed that the supernatural or sky God (*waaqaa uumaa*) was the creature of all things on the earth (the creature of all things on the earth or all elsewhere on the world). Similarly, the Guji Oromo community strongly believed that the creature of all things elsewhere in the world (*waaqaa uumaa*) has a strong power (position) over all things he created by his own hands

including the human beings and other things that were created by him. He could do what he wants to do, he could do where ever they want to do, he could do when he wants to do and he could do who wants to do it including all men and women of all elsewhere in this world. Also, he was the one who could do everything lonely (without any support from bodies). He is not like humans and he did all things correctly without of any mistakes. Therefore, Guji Oromo's women and men who live based on their traditional Gada system, believe that all the works of God take highly as always trues.

Indeed, they are also believed that God could punish men and a woman who done senior (bad actions that illegal by the laws of supernatural) in the societies like the following: The husband who bites his wife above the *Gulantaa* (the tree across the traditional house into two parties) in his own house when they fought each other, because, this area taken as the areas of the God in their families houses. Therefore, the Guji women have the right to not bite above the *gulantaa* in their own house and the God can punish her husband if he bites her above the *gulantaa* by death.

God may punish the men who have concluded marriage with the women who have the family relationship with his family like the relation of the same clan's aunt, grandmother, mother, and sister this man done incestuous, based on the Guji Oromo customary laws. God may punish this man by making his children disabled because they believed that, the supernatural laws not allowed these types of marriages based on the customary laws of the Guji Oromo Gada system. God may punish those who are fought or insult people whose cultural honor such as elders of the age of his father and mother suddenly die.

CONCLUSION

The involvement and the participation of Women in the Oromo Gadaa system in general and the Gujii Oromo Gadaa system, in particular, are perceived as inseparable from the time of immemorial. To that evidence, there was the era of women in the Gujii Gadaa system where several women ruled the communities at different times. However, as time goes, gradually the era of women was replaced by the patriarch being the head of the communities.

However, some scholars attempted to demonstrate in their research finding and conclude as the Gadaa system thoroughly exclude the role and participation of women from the Gadaa system. Nevertheless, I tried to elaborate on the result and discussion of the paper, Women have a tremendous indispensable role and significant participation in various Gadaa ceremonies, and play their role in different Gadaa

institutions, such as in atetee, siinqee, and adoyyee. Furthermore, in the Gujii Gadaa system, Abbaa Gadaa cannot assume or take the Abbaa Gadaa position as mandatory without having a wife called *haadha bollaa* which enables him to be eligible to be the Gadaa leader. Because of the common understanding in the Gujii Oromo Gadaa system, a person who is going to assume the Abbaa Gadaa power should lead his family appropriately which the community can evidence of his competence to lead the large community. In this highly interconnected relationship between the Gadaa system and women, haadha bola (the wife of Abbaa Gadaa) is considered by the community as she represents all women of the community.

Furthermore, it is not uncommon to see that women in this community have many roles in the political, social, cultural, economic, and spiritual practices. Therefore, considering the invaluable role and contribution of women in the Gadaa system, the government ought to enact different policies and laws that protect further the violation of women due to various internal and external factors.

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